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A PROPOSED ALUMNI CHAPTER

A new movement is under way which is so significant for the future of Sigma Xi that the general membership will welcome a statement of the matter. For many years the Constitution has contained an article providing for the formation of alumni chapters, and the possibility of organizing such has been the subject of frequent comment. One naturally thinks in this connection of the national capitol where there are to be found more scientific men of standing than in any other city on the continent as was shown in President Cattell's interesting study in American Men of Science. In the city of Washington itself the advantages of such a plan have long been recognized and the undertaking waited only for the stimulus of leadership to make it take definite form. At length men have come to the front willing to assume the burdens and responsibilities of initiating an appeal for a charter, and last January the movement was launched by the meeting of a few devoted and enthusiastic members of Sigma Xi and the formation of an organization committee. By its authority opinions were sought from all the local members in the District of Columbia. After due deliberation and consultation these local members prepared a formal appeal to Sigma Xi for the granting of a charter to found an alumni chapter. This appeal indicates a strength for our Society in that region which will doubtless be a surprise to many even among those conscious of the number of scientific men working in the government service. The letter was as follows:

WASHINGTON, February 3, 1914.

PRESIDENT J. McKEEN CATTELL,
Garrison-on-Hudson, N. Y.

Dear President Cattell:

It gives me great pleasure to inform you that Marcus Benjamin (Columbia), M. W. Lyon, Jr. (Brown), Paul Bartsch (Iowa), B. W. Evermann (Indiana), Edmond Heller (Stanford), L. O. Howard (Cornell), F. J. Katz (Chicago), W. R. Maxon (Syracuse), T. S. Palmer (California), J. E. Pogue (Yale), and B. H. Ransom (Nebraska), members of the Sigma Xi, residing in Washington, D. C., met in the U. S. National Museum on January 9, 1914, and formed themselves into a committee for the purpose of organizing an Alumni Chapter of the Sigma Xi in Washington, D. C.

A call for a meeting was sent to 225 members of the society, asking for their cooperation and in reply 126 answers were received of which 102 were favorable. Accordingly 54 members of the Sigma Xi met in the National Museum on January 30 and adopted the enclosed constitution and bylaws, and by vote ordered the committee to perfect the organization.

Therefore in accordance with section 3 of article 2 of the Constitution of the Society of the Sigma Xi, and in virtue of the authority conferred on me by the proposed "District of Columbia Chapter of the Sigma Xi", I have the honor to ask that a charter for an alumni chapter be granted to those members whose names are herewith and who expressed their desire to become charter members by signing the cards sent to them for that purpose.

Hoping for a favorable consideration of this request, I am

With much respect,

Yours very truly,

MARCUS BENJAMIN, *Acting President*

M. W. LYON, JR., *Acting Secretary-Treasurer*

Members may like to know where the Washington contingent came from and the following statement will therefore be of interest.

Cornell	40	Missouri	5
Nebraska	30	Brown	4
Minnesota	18	Syracuse	4
Yale	18	Union	3
California	14	Indiana	2
Chicago	13	Iowa	2
Michigan	12	Northwestern	2
Pennsylvania	12	Rensselaer	2
Columbia	10	Washington	2
Ohio	10	Worcester	2
Illinois	9	Case	1
Kansas	8	Purdue	1
Stanford	8		

The occupations or connections of these same persons are described as follows:

Department of Agriculture	101	U. S. Army	4
U. S. Geological Survey	37	Department of Interior	2
Bureau of Standards	22	Geophysical Laboratory	2
U. S. Patent Office	9	Hygienic Laboratory	2
Carnegie Institution	6	Panama Canal	2
U. S. Navy	6	U. S. Public Health and Marine	
U. S. National Museum	5	Hospital Service	2

U. S. Weather Bureau	2	Navy Yard	1
Bureau of Corporations	1	Patent Lawyer	1
Bureau of Fisheries	1	Physician	1
Catholic University	1	Smithsonian Institution	1
Civil Service Commission	1	Tariff Board	1
Commission on Economy and Ef- ficiency	1	University School	1
Draftsman	1	Unknown	1
Editor	1	U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey	1
Engineer	1	U. S. Lighthouse Service	1
Farmer	1	U. S. Magnetic Service	1
Geologist	1	U. S. Mines	1
George Washington University	1	U. S. Reclamation Service	1
Howard University	1	U. S. Treasury	1
Lawyer	1	Washington Cathedral	1
National University	1	Total	230

The matter has been laid before the Council and has been carefully discussed and thereafter finally approved. It has since been formally referred to the various chapters by the vote of the Council and will come up for chapter action at the early fall meetings. In the discussions of the Council more than one member expressed the thought that the Society itself would gain strength and dignity through the establishment of a chapter in our national capitol. There are certainly few places where Sigma Xi has so many members and the opportunity for the establishment of an active chapter with which these might affiliate is rather remote. Research work is emphasized in the various branches of the government service and is bound to receive greater emphasis as the years pass. If the Society is to gain any relation to this work it must be of an indirect character; and through such an organization as the proposed alumni chapter that relation could be established. Certainly it would be difficult anywhere to gather a more representative group of scientific men than the proposed charter members.

The discussion brought out the difficulty which such a chapter would need if it desires to elect new members; but the Society may confidently entrust the powers to such men, being assured that they will act with conservatism in the exercise of the privilege. There are research men, especially in Washington, who have not gained their rank by progress through the ordinary training of our educational institutions. Sigma Xi can benefit by their experience and will be enabled to escape the narrowing influences of a single class by their advice. The best way to enlist their aid is through a local alumni chapter that has at hand the fullest evidence of their work as a basis for election.